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67. *Toxostoma curvirostre curvirostre*. Curved-billed Thrasher. Several thrashers of this species were seen, and the species no doubt breeds, on Padre Island, as young birds were found.

68. *Penthestes carolinensis agilis*. Texas Chickadee. A common breeding species on Padre, seen also on several occasions on the mainland. Young birds were already out of the nest on May 31.

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Department of Biology, Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College, College Station, Texas, April 17, 1922.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Top Speed of the Road-runner.—While motoring along a paved road, August 15, 1921, I had an unusual opportunity of recording the speed of the fast-running Road-runner (*Geococcyx californianus*). The road was situated just above the sea in a private estate known as the Hope Ranch, near Santa Barbara. We were just entering a long driveway bordered on either side with palms, and coasting along on about a three percent grade, when a Road-runner appeared a few rods ahead. The car gained on the bird until about five yards separated us, and I saw it was running at its utmost speed. I instructed my friend, who was driving, not to press him further, and for fully three hundred yards the bird ran from the huge monster in pursuit, the while the speedometer registered exactly fifteen miles per hour. When finally we approached very closely, the bird gave up and flew into a palm, where I plainly saw it, beak agape and apparently much fatigued from the unusual exertion. Shortly after, I saw it sail to the ground and trot slowly away.

The proximity of the car and the closely grown palms were undoubtedly the two obstacles that kept the Road-runner on a straight-away course. It seemed baffled; from its viewpoint the palms probably appeared like a solid hedge. During the run, the bird's position was almost a straight line from beak to tip of tail. The tail drooped a little below the back and was frequently wagged up and down.—H. H. SHELDON, *Santa Barbara, California, June 15, 1922.*

A Southern Station for the Harlequin Duck.—The southernmost record-station for *Histrionicus histrionicus* on the Pacific Coast previous to the present note is Carmel Point, Monterey County, California (Beck, Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., 4th ser., iii, 1910, p. 69).

About noon on October 8, 1918, at a place on the coast of San Luis Obispo County

about two and one-half miles south of Piedras Blancas, Mr. Joseph Dixon and I saw a full-plumaged male Harlequin Duck diving repeatedly in the rough water among the outlying rocks about 60 yards from the brink of the low bluff where we stood. Some minutes later, the bird hauled up on the side of a rock facing the shore, where it sat some three feet above the surface of the water, preening vigorously. Its conspicuous markings, even to the chestnut of the flanks, showed plainly. Mr. Dixon took a photograph of it at 50 yards range; the image, although too small for reproduction, is there with some detail—perfectly good, permanent “evidence” of the identity of the duck (photo no. 2825, Mus. Vert. Zool.).

On October 14, we passed the place again, and this time saw a pair of Harlequin Ducks in flight above the surf, one very close behind the other, the female foremost.

There is a great extent of rough coast-line, with numerous off-shore rocks, along Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties—just such territory as the Harlequins seem to prefer when not on the inland mountain streams to which they resort during a brief period of the year for nesting. These ducks may well be present there in some numbers and yet as a rule be beyond eye-range from shore.—J. GRINNELL, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, June 19, 1922.*

Some New Birds for Oklahoma.—In the farthest northwestern corner of the Oklahoma panhandle, two miles from New Mexico and eight from Colorado, I found several species of birds that apparently have not been previously reported from this state. This is a region of sand-stone mesas, covered with a sparse growth of pinyons, junipers (*Juniperus monosperma*) and scrub oaks; the elevation varies from about 4600 feet in the valley where the town of Kenton is situated, to about 4800 feet on top of the surrounding mesas.

Aphelocoma woodhousei. Woodhouse Jay. Three of these birds were seen on the mesas, June 1, 1922, and two the next day. No new nests were found, but we saw a number of old ones, mere platforms of twigs, that apparently could have belonged to no other bird.

Cyanocephalus cyanocephalus. Pinyon Jay. There were three pairs of these noisy jays on the mesas June 1. My daughter Constance found one of their nests containing an egg and two newly hatched young; this was in a juniper eight feet from the ground. We saw four or five old nests in the junipers and pinyons.

Peucaea cassini. Cassin Sparrow. We saw and heard four of these exquisite songsters from May 30 to June 2; they were all in alfalfa fields about Kenton.

Pipilo fuscus mesoleucus. Canyon Towhee. Common on the sides of the mesas. We found three nests, one on June 1 and two on June 2; the first two each contained three eggs, one being in a juniper and the other in a pinyon, while the last nest was situated in a tree cactus and contained three young.

Psaltiriparus plumbeus. Lead-colored Bush-tit. A pair of these little birds, and also a single individual, were seen on the mesas June 1 and 2.—MARGARET M. NICE, *Norman, Oklahoma, June 27, 1922.*

Notes from Imperial Valley.—Duck Hawk (*Falco peregrinus anatum*). While exploring a marsh that in proper season is a popular duck-hunting preserve, near Calipatria, I observed the following novel method of a Duck Hawk in attacking its prey. Three Shovellers had risen near the boat, and at a distance of perhaps seventy-five yards were about fifty feet above the water, when a hawk rose swiftly from concealment among the tules and fastened to the rear of the hindmost duck. The flapping of both attacker and victim carried them about fifty yards to a floating mat of tules, whence I started the hawk a few minutes later. Apparently the duck had not realized its danger, as there was no deviation in its line of flight previous to being struck. Had the hawk struck from above in true falcon style, the prey would have fallen into open water and been lost.

Verdin (*Auriparus flaviceps flaviceps*). Nests of the Verdin were numerous in mesquite-grown gullies in the above locality, among them many that were hardly more than one-third the bulk of the ordinary structure. All these small nests were unlined, with the cavity hardly big enough to hold more than one bird; and they were always

located near others of the regulation size and character. I am unable to learn that these peculiar nests have heretofore been commented upon. To my mind they are *roosting* nests, built for that exclusive purpose, possibly to shelter the male while its mate is brooding.

A mysterious crane (*Grus americana?*). The sonorous notes of cranes were heard on several occasions, always at a great height. In one instance the field-glasses showed five birds in all-dark plumage, circling round and round, in crane fashion, in company with three larger white ones with black, or dark, primaries. As memory serves me, they were identical in appearance with a similar flock seen in northern Illinois in the '80's, and which were doubtless Whooping Cranes. If these were not of that species, what were they? And if they were Whooping Cranes, why in California?

Black-and-White Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*). During the past four years this species has been reported to the writer by local observers a half-dozen times or more, but these reports were never verified by actual specimens until early this last spring, when a bird was taken by Dr. L. B. Bishop near Los Angeles. Later, on April 6, I secured a male at Thermal, in Coachella Valley, feeding among the mesquites. These, I believe, are the second and third recorded captures for southern California. Mrs. L. U. Everhart, of Thermal, reported a specimen there in early March, possibly the same bird secured by me a month later. Apparently this species is becoming less rare in our region, or possibly bird students are making fewer mistakes in identifying the Black-throated Gray species.—L. E. WYMAN, *Los Angeles Museum, Los Angeles, California, June 9, 1922.*

A Unique Breeding Colony of Least Terns.—For several years a colony of Least Terns, the western form now called the Brown Least Tern (*Sternula antillarum browni*), had nested on the beach just south of the outskirts of Venice, Los Angeles County. (See Chambers, Condor, x, November, 1908, p. 237.) As this section built up, the terns had a harder and harder time of it trying to raise their young. I have found eggs within twenty feet of an occupied dwelling. Of course, with all the dogs and cats about, as well as curious children, there was not much chance for the poor birds. Finally the terns moved their breeding grounds across a canal, to the very last stretch of sand-dunes, and there nested for several years, but as the town continued to grow in population so did the tern colony decrease. When a bridge was built over the canal, that, of course, meant the end of the colony. The birds struggled along, however, till but a few were left.

On July 8, 1922, while I was hunting over the mud flats, a mile or more back from the sand-dunes, to my surprise I found that the terns had established themselves there in a most unusual sort of place for this species. It was gratifying to find them increased in numbers. They had chosen for their nesting grounds a portion of the dried-up mud flats, a little over a mile from the ocean. They will be in comparative safety there as they are in a posted gun-club preserve quite removed from dogs, cats and dwellings. Several nests were found, no nests at all really, the eggs being simply laid on the hard, dried mud. In some instances, where the mud was soft, the eggs were laid in slight depressions, scratched out by the bird and lined with a few weed stems. At this date sets of two eggs each were seen, but I did not ascertain the stage of incubation. I found two young birds just out of the eggs, one of the usual coloration, the other a light buffy bird. It looked almost yellow beside its nest mate.

The mud on which the birds were nesting, when wet, is of the most tenacious character. On the beaks of the nestlings there were masses of dried mud, accumulated, I suppose, when their bills got wet in being fed by their parents. I cleaned their bills but have been wondering if the mud would interfere with their successful rearing. A nesting site other than sand is a novelty in the life history of the Least Tern. I have seen most of their breeding colonies in southern California and they were all on the sandy beaches a short distance above high tide, or more rarely among the sand-dunes.—CHESTER C. LAMB, *Los Angeles, California, July 8, 1922.*

The Southward Range of the Santa Cruz Chickadee.—The southernmost place whence *Penthestes rufescens barlowi* has been recorded heretofore is near the mouth of the Little Sur River, Monterey County (Grinnell, Auk, xxi, 1904, p. 367; Jenkins, Condor, viii, 1906, p. 129). Coniferous forest growths of the humid coast type, such as are

inhabited by this chickadee, are, south of the vicinity of Point Sur, much restricted and far scattered. The last mainland representation of such forest is in the vicinity of Cambria, San Luis Obispo County, some 75 miles south-southeast of Point Sur. There are several square miles of woods there, consisting almost solely of the Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata*).

Mr. Joseph Dixon was collecting at Cambria, October 27 to November 3, 1918, and found Santa Cruz Chickadees to be not uncommon there; he took five skins (now nos. 30232-30236, Mus. Vert. Zool.) on October 28 and November 1. There, then, is an apparently well established and rather far sequestered colony of the species. Comparison with seasonally similar specimens from the vicinity of Monterey shows the Cambria birds to average paler, nearer white, on the mid-ventral surface. This feature, however, is not pronounced enough or sufficiently uniform to warrant my considering it positively of phylogenetic significance.—J. GRINNELL, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, June 20, 1922.*

Road-runner Caught in the Act.—Probably everybody "has heard" that Road-runners eat the eggs and young of quail. Heretofore I have been inclined to class this rumor with the other one about their corralling rattlesnakes with cactus.

On July 9 I was inspecting the quail crop at the Tome Gun Club, near Belen, New Mexico. On the bank of an irrigation ditch, grown to willow bushes with here and there a cottonwood tree, my dog flushed a quail, which looked like an old rooster. At the same time, from the same place, the dog flushed a Road-runner, which hopped into a cottonwood. A careful look showed the Road-runner sitting dead still among thick foliage, with a light-colored object in his bill. I shot him, and the dog retrieved. The dog then pointed under the same tree, another quail flushed (the old hen) and on looking carefully I discovered a whole brood of chicks scattering in the weeds. I then examined the spot where the Road-runner had fallen, and found a dead chick, still limber and warm but unmutilated, matching the live chicks in size, and lying within a foot of the blood. The dead chick was still in the downy stage, with $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch pin feathers on the wing—smaller than a domestic chick when hatched.

The evidence is practically absolute that the Road-runner was caught in the act. His crop was empty. Possibly by coincidence, each of the five other Road-runners seen during the rest of the day were in the immediate vicinity of quail.—ALDO LEOPOLD, *Albuquerque, New Mexico, July 10, 1922.*

The Cedar Waxwing in Mexico.—On February 11 of the present year I was passing through the town of Tehauntepec when I was greeted with what to me was a voice from the old home town, the low, subdued hiss of the Cedar Waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*). There were several small flocks of six or eight taking their morning's exercise in a banana grove and apparently feeding there. During the next several days I was passing up the Tequixistlan River and saw several more flocks of about the same size along the trail. In the vicinity of Port Angel on the Pacific coast during the latter part of February and early in March there were a few of these birds scattered here and there. On April 16, while spending the day in Chapultepec Park in Mexico City, I was again pleasantly surprised to hear these same notes. There was a flock of twenty-nine birds circling around and occasionally settling in the pines, from which they flew down into the grass where they were foraging. Just a week later I was in the city of Monterey in the state of Nuevo Leon in the northern part of Mexico, where again I met a small flock of Cedar Waxwings.

Tehauntepec is in the southern part of Mexico, is but a hundred feet or so above sea-level, is very hot, and has an abundance of irrigated tropical vegetation. The Tequixistlan basin is under about the same conditions, but without the irrigated areas; Port Angel at this season is dry and the trees are for the most part bare. In all of these places the inhabitants are Indians. Mexico City is at 7600 feet elevation, and has a cool climate; its vegetation is of the Oregon or northern California type. In Chapultepec Park, the ancient Aztec kings, the subsequent Spanish conquerors, and the following Mexican presidents, have had their palaces. Monterey is but a few hundred feet above the sea, is very hot, and has the floral and faunal aspect, as well as the climate, of

southwest Texas. All of which goes to show that the Cedar Waxwing in winter shows little choice among different climates and surroundings.—R. H. PALMER, *Instituto Geologico, Mexico, D. F., June 17, 1922.*

Some Birds Recently Observed in Southern California.—The past year, during both the fall and spring migrations, the writer has hunted assiduously in many favorable spots in southern California for the different waders. During these hunts a careful lookout was kept for two of our rarest shore bird visitants, the Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres morinella*) and the Surf Bird. No Surf Birds were seen, but seven Ruddy Turnstones were observed. Near Point Mugu, Ventura County, on August 27, 1921, two were seen, and one of them, a male, was secured. Five were seen on the tide flats near Wilmington, Los Angeles County, on May 7, 1922, and two of these were collected. Both were females, one a young bird and the other in nearly full breeding plumage. There are quite a few instances of occurrences of this turnstone during the fall migration, but no spring records from the southern California mainland, though it was met with on San Nicolas Island from March 30 to May 11, 1910 (Willett, *Pac. Coast Avifauna*, 7, 1912, p. 41).

On August 21, 1921, on the mud flats near Wilmington, there were many large flocks of Northern Phalaropes (*Lobipes lobatus*) (later in the fall many *Phalaropus fulicarius* also), but I was indeed surprised to see a large flock of Wilson Phalarope (*Steganopus tricolor*) busily feeding in the mud near the water's edge. Unlike the Northern Phalaropes, which were swimming constantly, they fed on the banks, though occasionally running into the shallow water. I estimated the flock of Wilson Phalaropes to be somewhat over two hundred birds. They kept in a compact mass and it was difficult to count them, though they were very tame and unsuspicious. All appeared to be in winter plumage, as were the specimens collected. The place was visited several times afterwards at intervals of a few days each, but the birds were not seen again.

On July 4, 1922, three Black-bellied Plover (*Squatarola squatarola*), all in winter plumage, or perhaps young birds, were observed near Venice, feeding among a mixed flock of Long-billed Dowitchers, Least Sandpipers, Greater Yellow-legs, Black-necked Stilts, Hudsonian Curlews, and Marbled Godwits. Were these birds very early fall migrants, very late spring migrants, or had they been there since the past winter?

On February 19, 1922, I took a female Eastern Fox Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca iliaca*) at the mouth of Verdugo Canyon, near Glendale, Los Angeles County. It is quite reddish but not to such an extent as the typical bird from the east.

A short trip to Buena Vista Lake, Kern County, was made on June 11, 1922, in company with Mr. Luther Little. What impressed us most was the irregular occurrence of some of the breeding birds, comparing different years. For several years the water of the lake has been very low, but now, the copious rains of last winter have made it higher than for many previous years. Last season, large numbers of White Pelicans (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) were present all summer, but did not nest; the water was not high enough to form their nesting island and it seems that these birds must have an island or they will not nest. This year, although their island was formed, there were but few Pelicans around and those were not nesting. The reason may have been that this year there are only a few fish left of the myriads that were there formerly.

Western Grebes (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*) were nesting abundantly. Last year none nested (in fact only one was seen), while the year before, Mr. Adriaan van Rossem tells me they were breeding commonly.

White-faced Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis guarauna*) were present in a large breeding colony. This is the first time, after several visits to the lake, that I have found this species nesting there. In the same way, Avocets (*Recurvirostra americana*) breed irregularly; but Black-necked Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*) are more constant.—CHESTER C. LAMB, *Los Angeles, California, July 8, 1922.*

Vaux Swift in Migration.—On April 29, 1922, about 7 p. m., the largest flock of Vaux Swift (*Chaetura vauxi*) I have ever seen or, in fact, heard of, circled over my house several times. By careful estimate I judged the number to be very nearly six

hundred individuals. My observations of the Vaux Swift have heretofore been made only within its breeding range; while this is my first observance of a migrating flock, such an immense gathering of this rather rare wilderness dweller is no doubt a most unusual occurrence.—H. H. SHELDON, *Santa Barbara, California, June 15, 1922.*

Nesting of the Spotted Sandpiper on the Russian River.—As the Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*) breeds but sparingly and locally along the larger streams of the coast belt and is thought to be a rare species in the coast region north of Santa Barbara (Grinnell, *Distributional List of the Birds of California*, p. 53; Grinnell, Bryant and Storer, *Game Birds of California*, pp. 431-437) a definite instance of its breeding on the Russian River may be of sufficient interest to record. During the period May 29, 1922, to June 2, 1922, I spent a few hours each day observing birds along the Russian River between Hilton and Cosmo in Sonoma County, California, and frequently saw one and sometimes two adult birds of this species flying along the river, always very close to the surface of the water and following the course of the river. These birds flew in the characteristic manner of this species, that is, without raising the wings above the back. They did not fly at all in the manner of sandpipers commonly seen along the shores of San Francisco Bay. Parties of people in boats or canoes did not disturb the course of flight except to cause the birds to swerve to avoid the obstacles by a few yards only.

Again during the period July 20, 1922, to July 26, 1922, I visited the same territory and saw the adult birds and two very small young on a pebbly beach on the right bank of the river about opposite Cosmo. The adult birds were seen flying as before but the young birds could not be induced to fly, although they ran very well and were very apt in hiding in the brush along the bank of the river and in concealing themselves among the stones. The adult birds exhibited the habit of constantly tilting or bobbing the tail, and symptoms of the same trait were slightly noticeable in the young. The food procured apparently consisted of insects, in pursuing which the tilting or bobbing of the tail was greatly accelerated.

I visited this particular beach every day on my last trip, except the first and last days, and found the birds there each time. Upon my approach one of the adult birds began calling and the two tiny young would scurry off along the shore until they found a hiding place. The opportunities I had of seeing the birds repeatedly at close range, the characteristic call note and the habit of bobbing or tilting the tail, leave me without doubt as to the identity of the birds. I also took the precaution of looking at skins in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. The fact that the young birds were not yet able to fly is strong evidence that they were hatched not far from the point where seen, although it is said that adult birds of this species have been known to move their young to places of safety. One of the adult birds was always near the young, gave warnings of my approach, displayed evident anxiety when I was about, and when forced to fly returned to near the point of departure, so that there seems no inference but that I was observing a pair of adults and their young.—CLAUDE GIGNOUX, *Berkeley, California, August 6, 1922.*

Additional Capture of a Black-and-White Warbler in California.—On October 11, 1918, at a point near the seacoast about seven miles north of Piedras Blancas, San Luis Obispo County, California, I shot an immature female *Mniotilta varia*. The bird was sighted at early dusk working, nuthatch-fashion, around the base of a cottonwood and among some nearby driftwood. Although the place was shaded I could see with distinctness the contrasting black and white stripes on the head and back of the bird. The geographic location, more exactly, was just to the right of the road-crossing to the Evans ranch, in the bottom of the canyon of San Carpoforo (locally "San Carpojo") Creek and about half a mile from the ocean shore.

That the specimen in question (now no. 30083, Mus. Vert. Zool.) was a "bird of the year" was shown conclusively by the condition of the skull. The bird was very fat. It was in complete first-winter plumage save for the tail; only two of the rectrices (evidently belonging to the juvenal plumage) were of full length, the rest being only about half-way emerged from their sheaths. This condition was probably due to some accident, not being part of the regular molt program.

As to measurements, the bird is small: wing 61.8 mm., exposed culmen 11.5, tarsus 16.5. Ridgway's smallest wing-length for a female of the species is 65 mm. (Birds N. and Mid. Amer., II, 1902, p. 433). It would be useful to know the measurements of other Pacific Coast examples, to the end that the source of the birds wintering with us might be learned. As far as known now, the Black-and-White Warbler does not breed in either Alaska or British Columbia; it looks as though they must come to us across-lots from some area to the eastward or northeastward.

The present record is the seventh for the capture of *Mniotilta varia* in California; that is, the present specimen is the 7th taken; two of the earlier captures were recorded two or more times each. At least four other individuals have been reported as seen. Of course this is an unusually easy bird to identify in the field, by reason both of its conspicuous markings and its peculiar mannerisms. But even so, probably but very few of the total number of Black-and-White Warblers visiting California each year come to human notice.

As suggested by Mr. L. E. Wyman on a preceding page, the frequency with which this bird is observed in California seems to be increasing of late years. This may be due, as he says, to an actual increase in the aggregate number of the birds visiting the state annually. Of course some fluctuations are to be expected, though hardly, I should think, a continual augmentation. More likely, in my mind, the increasing number of records is due directly to the increase in the number and the alertness of ornithological observers.—J. GRINNELL, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley, June 19, 1922.*

EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The annual meeting of the American Ornithologists' Union for 1922, being the fortieth stated meeting, will be held in Chicago, Illinois, the week beginning October 23. The public sessions will be held October 24, 25, and 26 in the new building of the Field Museum of Natural History, situated in Grant Park on the shore of Lake Michigan and within sight and walking distance of the business district and many of the best hotels. Since this will be the first stated meeting of the Union to be held west of the Atlantic seaboard, it is hoped that it may be widely representative of the whole country, with a good attendance from both East and West. The usual participants at eastern meetings, including the well known ornithologists of New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Washington, will be well represented; and it will be a particularly happy occasion if a good delegation is present from the Pacific Coast. From Chicago itself and from the states of the Middle West and South a large attendance is confidently expected. It is proposed to hold an exhibition of bird paintings following the example so successfully set at the Washington meeting in 1918. This feature will be especially developed and doubtless will be greatly appreciated by those who have not previously had opportunity to see a large and varied collection of original paintings of birds. Besides pictures to be exhibited by the artists themselves, it is hoped that pictures

owned by various members of the Union will be loaned for the occasion under terms which will entail no expense or risk to the owners. Correspondence in regard to this is invited by the Chairman of the local committee. The committee of arrangements consists of Wilfred H. Osgood (chairman), Percival B. Coffin, Ruthven Deane, O. M. Schantz, and R. M. Strong, together with the President and Secretary of the A. O. U., ex-officio.

Mr. A. C. Bent, of Taunton, Massachusetts, is at work upon the fifth volume of his *Life Histories*, relating to the ducks, geese and swans. He will be glad of contributions of information relative thereto and likely to be additional to the matter already accumulated.

The list of the Board of Governors of the Cooper Club which appeared in the last issue of *THE CONDOR* omitted, by inadvertence, the names of Donald R. Dickey, W. B. Judson, and Curtis Wright. These should have been included.

A good deal is being said in the daily press about an alleged hybrid between turkeys and fowls, which goes under the name "turkhens" or "turkens". A fertile hybrid between so dis-related birds would be rather surprising. The evidence at hand indicates